

FOUNDATION FOR FAIR CONTRACTING OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

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March 25, 2013

Appropriations Committee
Room 2700, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Governor's Bill no. 6354
An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning
Central Government

Sen. Harp, Rep. Walker, members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Kimberly Glassman. I am the Director of the Foundation for Fair Contracting (FFC). The FFC is a non-profit organization created by labor and management in order to monitor all public works construction projects covered under the Connecticut General Statutes Section 31-53 and the Davis-Bacon Act. We accomplish this by reviewing public documents prepared and/or submitted by the owner and contractor(s). We focus on licensing, proper payment of prevailing wage rates, proper classification of workers and properly administered state apprenticeship standards.

The FFC's membership consists of a number of Building Trades unions and contractor associations, including the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 11, Sheet Metal Workers Local 38, Sheet Metal Workers Local 40, International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators & Asbestos Workers Local 33, United Union Of Roofers, Waterproofers And Allied Workers Local 9, International Union of Elevator Constructors Local 91, Bricklayers Local 1 Labor-Management Cooperation Trust and the Connecticut Ironworkers Contractors Association.

My organization prides itself on maintaining productive relationships with a number of state agencies, including but not limited to the Department of Labor, Department of Consumer Protection, Department of Revenue Services, Department of Administrative Services and the Department of Construction Services.

The FFC supports the Governor's proposal to merge the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and Department of Construction Services (DCS). However, we do have some concerns regarding the reassignment of project managers from DCS to the Board of Regents (BOR) and State Department of Education (SDE).

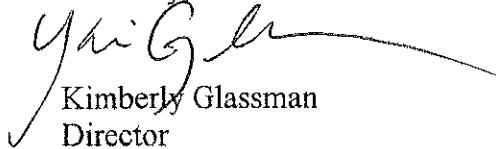
The proposed language would move all technical schools' construction to the SDE. It would also move all state colleges' (i.e. SCSU, etc) construction to the BOR.

The FFC applauds DCS for their oversight, the standards they impose, the vetting process for bid submissions and the rate of contracts awarded to in-state contractors. Ultimately, we applaud DCS for recognizing that the lowest bidder isn't necessarily the most responsible bidder.

Seeing as how construction isn't the primary focus for SDE and BOR, the concern is that the agencies may look for the lowest number - without taking into account the percentage of WBE/MBE/DBE hire; without taking into account whether the company has a certified apprenticeship program in Connecticut; without taking into account previous wage or workman's comp violations filed with the DOL; without taking into account whether the company and workers are Connecticut residents; and without taking into account previous bankruptcies and the frequency of new tax ID numbers.

We want to make sure that the BOR and SDE do not perpetuate the race to the bottom in the construction industry. Currently, DCS and DAS are looking at more ways to ensure that the most qualified resident bidder has a leg up on the competition. It is critically important that any agency responsible for letting a bid do everything it can to create a level playing field. Our hope is that, should this proposal pass, the BOR and SDE are required to take a contractor's history and integrity into account before awarding work to them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Kimberly Glassman', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Kimberly Glassman
Director